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Letter dated 25 November 2002 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to convey the attached letter, dated 21 November 2002, from Mr. Joschka Fischer, Deputy Chancellor and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Germany, and Mr. Jaap G. de Hoop Scheffer, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Annex

Letter dated 21 November 2002 from the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Germany and the Netherlands addressed to the Secretary-General

The Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of the Netherlands welcome the positive developments in Afghanistan since the successful completion of the Emergency Loya Jirga in June 2002. The continued strong support from the international community, however, is essential to strengthen the newly established political order. We would like to congratulate you and Ambassador Brahimi for the key role the United Nations has played in the past months to foster peace and stability in Afghanistan.

We would like to inform you that the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of the Netherlands are willing to assume the lead nation status for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) for a period of six months, following an extension of the authorization of the International Security Assistance Force by the Security Council. Germany and the Netherlands are looking forward to a prolongation, for a period of 12 months, of Security Council resolution 1413 (2002) to be adopted by the end of November in order to fulfil the national parliamentary requirements in due course. The six-month period will commence with the actual transfer of responsibility from the current lead nation, Turkey, to the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany and the Kingdom of the Netherlands have taken this decision with the understanding that the mandate and the area of responsibility of ISAF will be maintained as stipulated by the Security Council in its resolution 1386 (2001) and reconfirmed in Security Council resolution 1413 (2002) and that the national parliamentary requirements for the continued participation of their forces in ISAF will be met. The core mission of ISAF would remain to be of assistance to the Government of Afghanistan in the maintenance of security for Kabul and its surrounding areas, as envisaged in annex 1 to the Bonn Agreement, while the responsibility for providing security and law and order throughout Afghanistan continues to reside with the Afghans themselves.

Under the leadership of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland as well as Turkey, and with the valuable assistance of the contributing States, ISAF has been successful in fulfilling its tasks. The continuous strong support of the international community is crucial for maintaining the present capabilities and efficiency of ISAF. An early adoption of a new Security Council resolution extending the mandate of ISAF will enable Member States to make concrete and timely contribution plans for the force.

As was the case under the leadership of the United Kingdom and Turkey, the International Security Assistance Force will continue to have a particular mission authorized by a Security Council resolution that is distinct from Operation Enduring Freedom. Germany and the Netherlands, as the lead nations, will exercise command of the International Security Assistance Force. They will continue to integrate the troops and equipment contributed by other nations and will have the support of the United States of America and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

With respect to the relationship between the International Security Assistance Force and forces operating in Afghanistan under Operation Enduring Freedom, and for reasons of effectiveness, close coordination will be maintained between ISAF and the United States Central Command to deconflict International Security Assistance Force and Operation Enduring Freedom activities and to ensure that each group's activities do not interfere with the successful execution of the other's.

The joint coordinating body established with representatives from the United States Central Command, the Government of Afghanistan and the International Security Assistance Force to deal with operational issues will be maintained.

To ensure effective political-military coordination, the Committee of Contributors will continue to meet with the lead nations as the chair. Germany and the Netherlands, as lead nations, will report regularly to the Security Council on developments.

The precise date for transfer of responsibility as the lead nation from Turkey to Germany and the Netherlands is envisaged to take place not later than 15 February 2003. Following the termination of the six-month period under the combined German-Dutch lead, the identification of a successor at an early stage will enable the timely preparations for the transfer of leadership. Germany and the Netherlands would like to ask you to support our efforts in identifying a successor lead nation by inviting Member States to consider urgently the possibility of taking over as the next lead nation.

(*Signed*) Joschka **Fischer** (*Signed*) Jaap **de Hoop Scheffer**